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C O N F I D E N T I A L TEGUCIGALPA 000592

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/14/2019
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [KDEM](#) [HO](#)
SUBJECT: HONDURAN COUP: POLITICAL WRAP-UP 07/14/09

REF: A. TEGUCIGALPA 579
[B.](#) TEGUCIGALPA 574
[C.](#) TEGUCIGALPA 567
[D.](#) TEGUCIGALPA 577 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: Ambassador Hugo Llorens, E.O. 12958 1.4 (d)

[1.](#) (U) Summary: This is the third in a series of daily round-ups of political news in the aftermath of the June 28 forcible removal and exile of President Manuel Zelaya from Honduras. End Summary.

Zelaya and Micheletti Maintain Hard Lines

[2.](#) (U) Local press reports announced the resumption of the President Arias sponsored talks between representatives of President Zelaya and De Facto President Micheletti for Saturday, July 18. Both Zelaya and Micheletti have until now maintained hard-line public postures. Zelaya, during a press conference in Nicaragua July 13, said he must be restored to power before the next round of negotiations. He demanded his immediate reinstatement and threatened to "proceed by other means" if negotiations fail.

[3.](#) (U) Micheletti's delegation released a statement reiterating that Zelaya will only be permitted to return to Honduras if it is to stand trial.

Tegucigalpa Returning to Normal...But Not Quite There Yet

[4.](#) (U) While the curfew has been lifted, there is still a significant military presence at public buildings, and international journalists have reported intimidation by the de facto regime. The intensity and frequency of protests has diminished. In Tegucigalpa, Zelaya supporters tried to organize road blocks but failed for lack of support.

[5.](#) (U) One of the largest teachers unions, representing 18,000 kindergarten and primary school teachers, suspended its participation in the national strike demanding the reinstatement of Zelaya. Five teachers unions declared they will remain on strike. Almost all primary schools resumed classes July 14, but most secondary schools remained closed. The National University has remained open despite the strike, but the National Teachers' University was closed. A march by secondary school parents and children to demand the reopening of all secondary schools is planned for July 15.

Electoral Tribunal Counting on OAS Observers

¶6. (U) Saul Escobar, president of the Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE), said he is still counting on OAS observers for the November 29 elections. He noted that the electoral process in Honduras was unaffected by the coup and the political crisis will not affect the quality of the upcoming election process. The TSE moved up the deadline for photographs and paperwork for candidates from July 28 to July 17, purportedly to allow time to properly organize for the elections.

National Party Leadership Seems Open to Compromise

¶7. (C) Poloff met with National Party (NP) Political Committee leaders Roberto Martinez Lozano, David Chavez and Oscar Escalante Ayala July 13 to discuss the political crisis. Martinez noted the NP's desire to restore the constitutional order in Honduras as soon as possible to help ensure successful and legitimate national elections. While the NP leaders continued to justify the removal of Zelaya as legal and as a "defense of democracy," they acknowledged that the action constituted a coup. They probed for possible compromises to reach a political agreement with Zelaya's government.

¶8. (C) Poloff said the USG shared the NP's goal of restoring the constitutional and democratic order. He stressed that the details of an agreement between the two sides in the political standoff would need to be worked out through negotiations. Poloff asked the NP leaders to convey to the de facto regime the urgency to reach an agreement. He stressed that failure to come to a quick and peaceful resolution in advance of national elections could de-legitimize the elections and prolong the political crisis to the detriment of all Hondurans. While firm in their assertion that the coup was justified and legal, the NP leaders said they understood the position of the United States and the International Community. They also agreed as to the urgency of a resolution to the crisis but made no promises to convey the message to the regime.

LLORENS